

Ticket to Work/Work Incentives Act
Medicaid Infrastructure Grant
Advisory Group

Meeting Minutes
October 22, 2003

The Ticket to Work/Work Incentives Improvement Act Medicaid Infrastructure Grant Advisory Group Meeting was called to order by Co-chair Alyce Thomas at 10:40 AM at the Minden Civic Hall.

Members in Attendance:

Nina Davenport-National Multiple Sclerosis Society
 Tracy Dupree-Nevada State Welfare Division/North
 Lisa Erquiaga- Northern Nevada Center for Independent Living
 Robert “Red” Foster-General Public Northern Nevada
 Terry Hardy—General Public Rural Nevada via teleconference
 William Heavilin- Nevada Disability and Law Center/ via teleconference
 Robin Renshaw-Nevada Parents Encouraging Parents/South
 Robert Simola-Ormsby ARC
 Alyce Thomas-Nevada Division of Mental Health & Development Services
 Jessie Harris-General Public/South
 Anthony “Tony” Amos-General Public/South

Members Not in Attendance:

Paul Gowins- Northern Nevada Center for Independent Living
 Kimberli Vare`-Skill Builders of Nevada

Staff:

Connie Anderson, Chief of Medicaid and Nevada Check Up Services
 Harry Snoek, Social Services Program Specialist III TWWIA
 Jeanne Schrauth, Administrative Assistant II TWWIA

Others Present:

Lori Stafford-Douglas Mental Health
 Bonnie Dixon- Nevada Disability and Law Center/North
 Ann Callenan-Douglas Mental Health
 Loretta Wilson
 Anoya Swan

I. Roll Call

Roll was called and a quorum was present. Alyce had the new Advisory Group members introduce themselves so Group members not present at last month's meeting could meet them.

II. Approval of September Meeting Minutes

Minutes were reviewed and it was found that some errors had been made. The minutes were approved with corrections.

III. Staff Projects Status Update

a. New Staff

Program Coordinator, Harry Snoek reported that a new staff member has been hired to staff the Las Vegas office. Her name is Lori Inera and she will start on 10/27/03 as a Social Service Program Specialist II. He reported that Lori has an extensive experience in writing policies and procedures as well as doing public presentations. He is looking forward to having her start next week.

b. HIWA Project Update

Harry began the HIWA update by advising the Group the Functional Requirements Definition for the premium collection development and NOMADS eligibility development portions of the HIWA program has been signed. The IT project will be developed by DoIT (the Department of Information Technology), in conjunction with NOMADS (Nevada Medicaid Eligibility System).

The IT project will allow the HIWA program to compile and sort statistics required for Federal reports. It will also allow the Welfare eligibility system to interface with the HIWA program and provide eligibility statistics for HIWA eligible Medicaid recipients.

c. MIG Conference

October 9th and 10th, 2003 Harry attended the annual Medicaid Infrastructure Grant/ Medicaid Buy-in Technical Conference in Washington, D.C. A wide variety of topics were discussed. It was a great experience because many states that have Buy-in Programs that are up and running did not look toward the issues of information technology before they started their development. Some states are experiencing quite a few problems getting reports and statistics and interfacing with the Welfare eligibility system. These are issues that hopefully Nevada will have solved well in advance of the HIWA implementation date of July 1, 2004.

Other topics were discussed that were also very interesting, one of which was a presentation made by the representatives from Minnesota. It was a video that was titled Working with Ability, not Disability. It was outstanding. Minnesota will be making copies and Nevada will be allowed to request one. Hopefully we will be able to make copies of it and show it around the state because it cites the benefits that the Buy-in Program brings to employers. Minnesota found that it really enhanced their ability to create additional employment opportunities. The video deals with employed individuals who have physical disabilities, developmental disabilities and mental illness. Alyce expressed great interest in seeing the video when it is received.

Nina Davenport stated that since she had attended the meeting earlier this year in Baltimore, she is on the mailing list and received information on this conference and was able to conference in on some of the subjects that she found of interest. Alyce commented that typically two people were sent, one staff member and one Group member. The question was raised whether this is now going to change to only sending staff to these conferences. Connie Anderson responded that it would depend on what the subject of the conference was and how much time there was to facilitate Advisory Group member attendance.

He also attended sessions that dealt with building data and evaluation of that data. There was also a session on statistics which provided a wealth of information in regards to how to gather statistics use them in the Federal reports that will need to be filed after the program is up and running. Another session that Harry attended dealt with improving programs and developing comprehensive employment opportunities. The video from Minnesota was used by these presenters with regard to increasing the number of employers that were hiring individuals. It was used with employers that employed less than 100 employees and as few as 20-25 employees. It was well received by both groups.

Another session Harry attended dealt with the Medicaid Buy-in research findings and employment outcomes to date. In that session presenters cited the fact that approximately 70 to 75% of the individuals who were on the Buy-in came from other Medicaid eligibility categories. It was interesting to find that the number of new individuals taking advantage of this program is only about 25%. Most states report these same percentages. Presenters reported the fact that they saw a steady increase in the income individuals were earning. Wisconsin cited the statistic that in excess of 50% of all the individuals on the Buy-in were individuals with mental illness, thus making mental illness the largest disability group participating in the Buy-in program. Other states' representatives confirmed there could be anywhere between 60 to 70% of the individuals on the Buy-in having mental illness. This is something that appears common in all states.

Another session dealt with transportation, reliable, affordable and accessible service. There was a presenter from the Federal Transportation Administration and also the retired Chief of Medicaid for New Mexico. Both presenters agreed that in most of the nation, transportation for individuals with disabilities remains a major problem. There is simply not enough transportation opportunity in the rural setting and this is a major problem. Cities seem to not have as many problems as rural settings. The Federal Transportation Administration Manager explained the Federal definition of public transport is a continuum of transportation which includes bus, subway, metro, para-transit, shared rides and family driving. Reimbursement issues were not discussed.

Medicare and Medicaid Services, CMS, also made presentations. Harry attended an overview of what CMS does. Basically CMS provides leadership service and supports the states. They also make regulations to which states have to adhere. CMS representatives discussed things such as logistics and eligibility for Medicaid Infrastructure Grant funding requirements of states that do not have the Buy-in as yet, such as Nevada, as well as explaining additional requirements that states that have a Buy-in program need to put into print. This is primarily statistical information as opposed to narrative information. CMS also had a session that dealt with the rebalancing of long-term care systems. CMS representatives stated that the amount of money spent on long-term care has more than doubled in the last eleven years, but that there has been a shift in where the dollars have gone. Eleven years ago 80% of the money for long-term care went to nursing home services. This has declined to 57% currently. CMS is hoping to see this decline continue in dollars spent on nursing home services in such a way that more services will be able to be provided at home.

VI. Old Business

None

V. New Business

a. Advisory Group-Where is it heading and what are its responsibilities?

Lisa Erquiaga asked that this topic be included in the agenda as that she feels that it is a waste of time on the part of everyone to have a meeting that only lasted 40 minutes as was the case with the one that was held in Las Vegas. Lisa stated she felt that the Advisory Group wasn't really doing anything in the last few meetings. The Advisory Group needs to figure out what their role is and what they are expected to do. She feels uninformed and uninvolved.

Alyce stated that in the past the agenda was discussed with the chairpersons. There was input from them as to what was going to be on the agenda and what information the Group wanted to be sent out besides the minutes and agenda to the Group members prior to the meeting. Alyce at this time passed along Paul Gowins request that he receive a phone call when an email goes out to him so he will check for it. Alyce suggested that we FAX items to Paul Gowins as well as email items to him.

The question was asked of Harry if the policy was written yet. He responded that only the definition section has been completed. With Lori Inera our new SSPS II now in place we hope to have policy written by the end of December. Then the document will be looked at and critiqued by administration and go through what is called the sign-off process. That is where we stand with policy now.

Alyce brought up the question of purchasing promotional materials. Harry responded that he had a concern with putting out things with the HIWA logo, the HIWA phone number, because he did not want to lead individuals to think this is an up and running program. Alyce stated people should know that it is up coming and not a functioning program yet. Promotional items get people aware of the name and what the program does so that there will not be a shortage of people who will apply. Harry also explained he is not sure how much money will be in the budget to purchase these items. It is all hinging on the Do IT bill as to how much money is left for promotion items. The suggestion was made that funds should be rolled over for next year. Harry advised the Group that CMS is not allowing all available funds to be rolled over to 2004. The Federal government will only allow \$500,000 to roll over to 2004. That is to cover the last quarter's expenses and salaries that are not reported until next year because of the Federal cut off date of October 31.

Harry's goal is to start doing presentations throughout the state starting between mid January and the beginning of February, so that we have a lot of people knocking on the door for eligibility applications come May 1.

Connie Anderson, Chief Medicaid & Nevada Check Up addressed the Advisory Group with some suggestions for Advisory Group responsibilities. She spoke of the role of the Advisory Group changing as the program starts to come online. She suggested that one role the Advisory Group can take is to review draft policy, let us know if it works in the real world. Make comments, give input, so forth. She suggested meeting become quarterly, possibly two-day sessions of brainstorming and discussion about policies, for example.

Alyce stated that she did not want the Group's comment about current staff taken as being critical. She feels that the current staff is doing a wonderful

job and has told Chuck Duarte this when asked. We just need to know what our role is for the next year.

Connie Anderson suggested that the timetable for HIWA be handed out and discussed at the next meeting. She felt it would be something that the Advisory Group and any attending public would find interesting.

Bill had a request from the Independent Living Center to speak briefly about HIWA and where the program was in development. Harry will draft some bullet points for Bill to work from. Tony Amos, Jessie Harris and Robin Renshaw along with Nina Davenport will help Bill staff the table at the 12th Annual Disability Awareness Day event. The University Center for Excellence (UAP program) contacted Bill requesting information on the HIWA program and changes in the law. Harry will send the bullet points to Bill and Bill will put an article together and send to Harry for review.

VI. Group Report

Alyce introduced Lori who is heading up the Consumer Conference in the Minden/Gardnerville area. She explained what the Consumer Conference is about and what it is trying to do. The first meeting for the Consumer Conference Development committee is in November.

VII. Public Comment

None.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at Noon.